

REMARKS

At the time of the instant office action, claims 1-51 and 54-56 were pending (of which unelected claims 40-51 and 54 were withdrawn). With the entry of this amendment, claims 1-33, 35-39, 55, and 56 will now be pending.

Unelected, withdrawn claims 40-51 and 54 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1-32, 55, and 56 are allowed.

Claims 34 and 36-39 are indicated as being allowable and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended independent claim 33 to include the features of allowable claim 34. Therefore, independent claim 33 (and claim 35 depending therefrom) should be in condition for allowance. Because the features of allowable claim 34 has been added to independent claim 33, Applicants have cancelled claim 34 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicants have also rewritten allowable dependent claims 36 and 37 into independent form, such that independent claims 36 and 37 (and all dependent claims therefrom) should be in condition for allowance.

Applicants have made the amendments to claims herein in an effort to expedite prosecution and to reduce costs associated with prosecution. The claim amendments are made without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained in original filed claims and without conceding or taking any position as to the merits of the rejections of any of the rejected claims. Applicants reserve the right to refile the originally-filed claims and contest rejections thereof in one or more subsequent applications. By making these claim amendments herein, however, Applicants do not necessarily agree or acquiesce with each statement in the Office action as to why claims are allowable/allowed or why claims have been rejected.

The claim amendments herein have rendered moot all of the Examiner's rejections to the claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to issue a notice of full allowance for the application.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (314) 726-7502.

Applicants believe that the correct fees have been included in connection with this filing. If, however, Applicants owe any additional fee(s), the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee(s) to Deposit Account No. **08-0750**. In addition, if there is ever any other fee deficiency or overpayment under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 or 1.17 in connection with this patent application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such deficiency or overpayment to Deposit Account No. **08-0750**.

Respectfully submitted,

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